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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

U. S. Department of Agriculture

A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

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Federal Grants and Agreements....

...Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act (P. L. 95-224)

OMB is directing a governmentwide study, required under Section 8 of P. L. 95-224, "to develop a better understanding of alternative means of implementing Federal Assistance programs and to determine the feasibility of developing a comprehensive system of guidance for Federal assistance programs."

The fact finding phase of the study has been completed and issue papers covering this major study area have been developed by the study groups established by OMB. An announcement inviting public comment on these papers will be published in the Federal Register shortly. Departmental agency comments have been requested no later than November 2.

Two major options have developed to date in the grants and agreements area. The first would provide for a central office of Assistance Management Policy within OMB and the other would establish a single governmentwide regulation system for Federal assistance programs.

...OMB Circular No. A-102 - Attachment 0 to Circular A-102 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Audit to State and local governments) has been issued and will be incorporated in 4AR. OMB is moving forward with proposed new audit requirements under A-102 and plans to issue Attachment P around January 1, 1980. OMB is putting together data from the 70 largest Federal Assistance programs, including FNS, FmHA and SCS, for early implementation under the new audit requirements. Other USDA agencies with programs covered by A-102 should now be giving consideration to developing major compliance factors for their respective programs to supplement the GAO audit guide.

...OMB Circular No. A-21 - USDA regulations to implement the latest versions of A-21 (Cost Principles for Educational Institutions) have been circulated for comment prior to including these new requirements in USDA regulations.

...OMB Circular No. A-88 - OMB is now accepting comments on a proposed revision to A-88 (Indirect Cost Rates, Audit and Audit Follow up at Educational Institutions). The revision will supersede Federal Management Circular 73-6.

(Contact: Don Manns, O&F, ext. 75630)

Department Safety and Health Policies.....The Office of Safety and Health Management published its proposed occupational safety and health program in the Federal Register on August 28, 1979. This program responds to all requirements of Section 19 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Executive Order 11807, and Department of Labor Guidelines for Federal programs.

(Contact: Julius Jimeno, OSHM, ext. 78247)

Federal Employees Compensation Act of 1979.....OMB has distributed a Department of Labor draft bill to Federal agencies for comment. This bill "To amend the Federal Employees Compensation Act in order to provide for more equitable benefits, to reestablish a waiting period for benefits, to promote the return of disabled workers for employment, to convert from FECA benefits to Civil Service Retirement at age 65, and for other purposes." Based upon responses received from agencies, OSHM has submitted a response to OMB.

Changes proposed in this Bill will have far reaching impact on all Federal agencies and injured employees.

(Contact: Anthony Musolino, OSHM, ext. 78247).

USDA Mortality Data.....OSHM has initiated an agreement with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to carry out a study to compare the number of deaths experienced by USDA employees with the number of deaths in the total US population. The purpose of the study is to associate potential excess deaths of USDA employees with possible occupational exposures.

NCI will also conduct a feasibility study to identify the direction and cost of an expanded epidemiological study.

(Contact Neil Davis, OSHM, 472-7074)

Citizens Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunity.....The first meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunity was held from September 5 to 7 in Washington.

The committee, appointed by Secretary Bergland and chaired by Assistant Secretary Wallace, has 28 members, representing various segments of society throughout the U.S. They will be responsible for policies, practices and procedures designed to promote equal opportunity and advising the Secretary on compliance of the program directives. The committee will also recommend changes in rules, regulations and orders to assure that the Department's activities are free from discrimination of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, handicap or marital status.

(Contact Jackie Sutton, OEO, ext. 77813)

Follow-up Compliance Review on Georgia CES.....OEO will initiate a follow-up compliance review of the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service (GCES) on September 24. The purpose of this state-wide review is to determine the progress made by the GCES in the areas of employment and program services since a 1974 civil rights audit conducted by OIG. OEO's follow-up review of GCES is the third in a series of seven follow-up reviews of State Extension programs that were found in civil rights noncompliance in 1974.

(Contact: Percy Luney, OEO, ext. 77327)